STRANGE NEWS
FROM
VIRGINIA;
Being a full and true
ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE and DEATH
OF
Nathanael Bacon Eſquire,

Who was the only Cauſe and Original of all the late Troubles in that COUNTRY.

With a full Relation of all the Accidents which have happened in the late War there between the Chriſtians and Indians.

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Strange News from Virginia, *being a full and true account of the Life and Death of* Nathanael Bacon *Eſquire, who was the only Cauſe and Original of all the late Troubles in that Country.*

THERE is no Nation this day under the copes of Heaven can ſo experimentally ſpeak the ſad Effects of men of great Parts being reduc't to neceſſity, as *England*; but not to rake up the notorious miſdemeanours of the dead, I ſhall endeavour to prevent the ſad effects of ſo deplorable a Cauſe, by giving you an account of the remarkable Life and Death of this Gentleman of whom I am about to diſcourſe. And becauſe when a man has once ingag'd himſelf in an ill action, all men are ready to heap an innumerable aſperſions upon him, of which he is no ways guilty, I ſhall be ſo juſt in the Hiſtory of his Life as not to rob him of thoſe Commendations which his Birth and Acquiſitions claim as due, and ſo kind both to Loyalty and the wholſom conſtituted Laws of our Kingdom, as not to ſmother any thing which would render him to blame.

This Gentleman who has of late becconed the attention of all men of underſtanding who are any ways deſirous of Novelty, or care what becomes of any part of the World beſides that themſelves live in, had the honour to be deſcended of an Ancient and Honourable Family, his Name *Nathanael Bacon*, to which to the long known Title of Gentleman, by his long ſtudy in the Inns of Court he has ſince added that of Eſquire. He was the Son of Mr. *Thomas Bacon* of an ancient Seat known by the denomination of *Freeſtone-Hall* in the County of *Suffolk*, a Gentleman of known loyalty and ability. His Father as he was able

able ſo he was willing to allow this his Son a very Gentile Competency to ſubſiſt upon, but he as it proved having a Soul too large for that allowance, could not contain himſelf within bounds; which his careful Father perceiving, and alſo that he had a mind to Travel (having ſeen divers parts of the World before) conſented to his inclination of going to *Virginia*, and accommodated him with a Stock for that purpoſe, to the value of 1800 *l. Starling*, as I am credibly informed by a Merchant of very good worth, who is now in this City, and had the fortune to carry him thither.

He began his Voyage thitherwards about Three years ſince, and lived for about a years ſpace in that Continent in very good repute, his extraordinary parts like a Letter of recommendation rendring him acceptable in all mens company, whilſt his conſiderable Concerns in that place were able to bear him out in the beſt of Society. Theſe Accompliſhments of mind and fortune rendred him ſo remarkable, that the worthy Governour of that Continent thought it requiſite to take him into his Privy Council.

That Plantation which he choſe to ſettle in is generally known by the name of *Curles*, ſituate in the upper part of *James* River, and the time of his Revolt was not till the beginning of *March* 167⅞. At which time the *Suſquo-hannan Indians* (a known Enemy to that Country) having made an Inſurrection, and kild divers of the *Engliſh*, amongſt whom it was his fortune to have a Servant ſlain; in revenge of whoſe death, and other dammages he received from thoſe turbulent *Suſquohanians*, without the Governour's conſent he furiouſly took up Arms againſt them, and was ſo fortunate as to put them to flight, but not content therewith; the aforeſaid *Governour* hearing of his eager purſuit after the vanquiſht *Indians*, ſent out a ſelect Company of Souldiers to command him to deſiſt; but he inſtead of liſtning thereunto, perſiſted in his Revenge, and ſent to the *Governour* to intreat his Commiſſion, that he might more chearfully proſecute his deſign; which being denyed him by the Meſſenger he

ſent for that purpoſe, he notwithſtanding continued to make head with his own Servants, and other *Engliſh* then reſident in *Curles* againſt them. In this interim the People of *Henrica* had returned him Burgeſs of their County; and he in order thereunto took his own Sloop and came down towards *James Town*, conducted by thirty odd Souldiers, with part of which he came aſhore to Mr. *Laurences* Houſe, to underſtand whether he might come in with ſafety or not, but being diſcovered by one Parſon *Clough*, and alſo it being perceived that he had lined the Buſhes of the ſaid Town with Souldiers, the Governour thereupon ordered an allarm to be beaten through the whole Town, which took ſo hot, that *Bacon* thinking himſelf not ſecure whilſt he remained there within reach of their Fort, immediately commanded his men aboard, and tow'd his Sloop up the River; which the Governour perceiving, ordered the Ships which lay at *Sandy-point* to purſue and take him; and they by the induſtry of their Commanders ſucceeded ſo well in the attempt, that they preſently ſtopt his paſſage; ſo that Mr. *Bacon* finding himſelf purſued both before and behind, after ſome capitulations, quietly ſurrendred himſelf Priſoner to the Governours Commiſſioners, to the great ſatisfaction of all his Friends; which action of his was ſo obliging to the Governour, that he granted him his liberty immediately upon Paroll, without confining him either to Priſon or Chamber, and the next day, after ſome private diſcourſe paſſed betwixt the Governour, the Privy Council, and himſelf, he was amply reſtored to all his former Honours and Dignities, and a Commiſſion partly promiſed him to be General againſt the *Indian* Army; but upon farther enqniry into his Affairs it was not thought fit to be granted him; whereat his ambitious mind ſeem'd mightily to be diſpleas'd; inſomuch that he gave out, that it was his intention to ſell his whole concerns in *Virginia*, and to go with his whole Family to live either in *Merry-land* or the *South*, becauſe he would avoid (as he ſaid) the ſcandal of being accounted a factious perſon there. But this reſolution it ſeems was but a

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pretence, for afterwards he headed the ſame Runnagado *Engliſh* that he formerly found ready to undertake and go ſharers with him in any of his Rebellions, and adding to them the aſſiſtance of his own Slaves and Servants, headed them ſo far till they toucht at the *Occonegies* Town, where he was treated very civilly, and by the Inhabitants informed where ſome of the *Suſquehanno's* were inforted, whom preſently he aſſails, and after he had vanquiſhed them, ſlew about ſeventy of them in their Fort: But as he returned back to the *Occoneges*, he found they had fortified themſelves with divers more *Indians* than they had at his firſt arrival; wherefore he deſired Hoſtages of them for their good behaviour, whilſt he and his followers lay within command of their Fort. But thoſe treacherous *Indians* grown confident by reaſon of their late recruit, returned him this Anſwer, *That their Guns were the only Hoſtages he was like to have of them, and if he would have them he muſt fetch them.* Which was no ſooner ſpoke, but the *Indians* ſallied out of the Fort and ſhot one of his Sentinels, whereupon he charged them ſo fiercely, that the Fight continued not only all that day, but the next alſo, till the approach of the Evening, at which time finding his men grow faint for want of Proviſion, he laid hold of the opportunity, being befriended by a gloomy night, and ſo made an honourable retreat homewards.

Howbeit we may judge what reſpect he had gain'd in *James-Town* by this ſubſequent tranſaction. When he was firſt brought hither it was frequently reported among the Commonalty that he was kept cloſe Priſoner, which report cauſed the people of that Town, thoſe of *Charles-City*, *Henrico*, and *New-Kent* Countries, being in all about the Number of eight hundred, or a thouſand, to riſe and march thitherwards in order to his reſcue; whereupon the Governor was forced to deſire Mr. *Bacon* to go himſelf in Perſon, and by his open appearance quiet the people.

This being paſt, Mr. *Bacon*, about the 25*th*. of *June* laſt, diſſatisfied that he could not have a Commiſſion granted him to

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go againſt the *Indians*, in the night time departed the Town unknown to any body, and about a week after got together between four and five hundred men of *New-Kent* County, with whom he marched to *James-Town*, and drew up in order before the Houſe of State; and there peremptorily demanded of the Governor, *Council* and *Burgeſſes* (there then collected) a Commiſſion to go againſt the *Indians*, which if they ſhould refuſe to grant him, he told them that neither he nor ne're a man in his Company would depart from their Doors till he had obtained his requeſt; whereupon to prevent farther danger in ſo great an exigence, the Council and Burgeſſes by much intreaty obtain'd him a Commiſſion Signed by the *Governor*, an Act for one thouſand men to be Liſted under his command to go againſt the *Indians*, to whom the ſame pay was to be granted as was allowed to them who went againſt the *Fort*. But *Bacon* was not ſatisfied with this, but afterwards earneſtly importuned, and at length obtained of the *Houſe*, to paſs an Act of Indemnity to all Perſons who had ſided with him, and alſo Letters of recommendations from the Governor to his Majeſty in his behalf; and moreover cauſed Collonel *Claybourn* and his Son Captain *Claybourn*, Lieutenant Collonel *weſt*, and Lieutenant Collonel *Hill*, and many others, to be degraded for ever bearing any Office, whether it were Military or Civil.

Having obtained theſe large Civilities of the *Governor*, *&c.* one would have thought that if the Principles of honeſty would not have obliged him to peace and loyalty, thoſe of gratitude ſhould. But, alas, when men have been once fluſht or entred with Vice, how hard is it for them to leave it, eſpecially if it tends towards ambition or greatneſs, which is the general luſt of a large Soul, and the common error of vaſt parts, which fix their Eyes ſo upon the lure of greatneſs, that they have no time left them to conſider by what indirect and unlawful means they muſt (if ever) attain it.

This certainly was Mr. *Bacon*'s Crime, who after he had once lanched into Rebellion, nay, and upon ſubmiſſion had been pardoned

doned for it, and alſo reſtored, as if he had committed no ſuch hainous offence, to his former honour and dignities (which were conſiderable enough to content any reaſonable mind) yet for all this he could not forbear wading into his former miſdemeanors, and continued his oppoſition againſt that prudent and eſtabliſhed Government, ordered by his Majeſty of *Great Brittain* to be duly obſerved in that Continent.

In fine, he continued (I cannot ſay properly in the Fields, but) in the Woods with a conſiderable Army all laſt Summer, and maintain'd ſeveral Bruſhes with the Governors Party: ſometime routing them, and burning all before him, to the great damage of many of his Majeſties loyal Subjects there reſident; ſometimes he and his Rebels were beaten by the Governor, *&c.* and forc't to run for ſhelter amongſt the Woods and Swomps. In which lamentable condition that unhappy Continent has remain'd for the ſpace of almoſt a Twelve-month, every one therein that were able being forc't to take up Arms for ſecurity of their own lives, and no one reckoning their Goods, Wives, or Children to be their own, ſince they were ſo dangerouſly expos'd to the doubtful Accidents of an uncertain War.

But the indulgent Heavens, who are alone able to compute what meaſure of puniſhments are adequate or fit for the ſins or tranſgreſſions of a Nation, has in its great mercy thought fit to put a ſtop, at leaſt, if not a total period and concluſion to theſe *Virginian* troubles, by the death of this *Nat. Bacon*, the great Moleſtor of the quiet of that miſerable Nation; ſo that now we who are here in *England*, and have any Relations or Correſpondence with any of the Inhabitants of that Continent, may by the arrival of the next Ships from that Coaſt expect to hear that they are freed from all their dangers, quitted of all their fears, and in great hopes and expectation to live quietly under their own Vines, and enjoy the benefit of their commendable labours.

I know it is by ſome reported that this Mr. *Bacon* was a very hard drinker, and that he dyed by inbibing, or taking in two much Brandy. But I am informed by thoſe who are Perſons of undoubted

undoubted Reputation, and had the happineſs to ſee the ſame Letter which gave his Majeſty an account of his death, that there was no ſuch thing therein mentioned: he was certainly a Perſon indued with great natural parts, which notwitſtſtanding his juvenile extravagances he had adorned with many elaborate acquiſitions, and by the help of learning and ſtudy knew how to manage them to a Miracle, it being the general vogue of all that knew him, that he uſually ſpoke as much ſenſe in as few words, and delivered that ſenſe as opportunely as any they ever kept company withal: Wherefore as I am my ſelf a Lover of Ingenuity, though an abhorrer of diſturbance or Rebellion, I think fit ſince Providence was pleaſed to let him dye a Natural death in his Bed, not to aſperſe him with ſaying he kill'd himſelf with drinking.

FINIS.